

Génome Québec Project Management Guidelines

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1. GÉNOME QUÉBEC MISSION STATEMENT

Génome Québec’s mission is to catalyze the development and excellence of genomics research and promote its integration and democratization.

2. INTRODUCTION

Génome Québec designs, funds and administers a suite of programs and competitions aimed at stimulating research and innovation in genomics – from discovery to research applications – across four strategic sectors (health, agrifood, forestry and environment) in Quebec. Génome Québec has the mandate to ensure the effective management of projects and platforms financed through funds from the Ministère de l’Économie, de l’Innovation et de l’Énergie (MEIE) and potential partners and to transmit to funding sources performance indicators and other pertinent information.

Génome Québec’s project management guidelines (hereinafter called “guidelines”) apply, in general, to all Génome Québec funding. Requests for applications will mention any exceptions to these guidelines or include additional rules applicable to specific competitions or programs. The guidelines provide details on eligibility criteria for Génome Québec funding, the acceptable uses of funds, the obligations of funding recipients, and other related issues. For competitions in partnership with Génome Canada for which Génome Québec funds are disbursed, other guidelines specific to these competitions will apply.

Under these guidelines, the term “project” includes all research activities that receive funds from Génome Québec, including support for technology platforms or initiatives.

3. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

Any person submitting an application for funding must meet the following eligibility conditions, along with the specific conditions set out in the program guidelines.

3.1. Eligibility Conditions

3.1.1. Eligible Institutions

Génome Québec funds can only be awarded to persons affiliated with one or more of the following types of organizations:

- Quebec-based universities and their affiliated institutions, including hospitals and research institutes
- College centres for the transfer of technology (CCTT)
- Quebec-located non-profit organizations (including community or charitable organizations) with an explicit research mandate

3.1.2. Eligible Persons

Persons eligible to receive and administer Génome Québec funds must meet the following criteria:

- Be autonomous regarding their research activities.
- Have an academic appointment or a research position at an eligible institution, such that they are:

- Authorized to pursue the proposed research project independently for the duration of the funding, supervise students and trainees, and publish research results.
- Required to comply with the regulations and guidelines of their organization concerning the conduct of research, the supervision of trainees, and the employment conditions of staff.

3.1.3. Project Team Member Categories

Project Leader

The project leader is responsible for the intellectual direction of the project. In applications where responsibility for the intellectual direction of the project is shared more or less equally between two or more people, the project team can appoint more than one project leader. However, at least one of these project leaders must be eligible to receive and administer funds from Génome Québec. The project team must appoint an administrative project leader, who will assume the overall administrative and financial responsibility for Génome Québec funds remitted in support of the project.

Under these guidelines, the “host institution” is the institution in which the administrative project leader directs the research, while the “participating institution” is any other research institution participating in the project (hosting a researcher or any other project leader).

Co-Investigators

A co-investigator is a person who makes a significant intellectual contribution to the proposed research and participates in the day-to-day execution of the project. Academic co-investigators will also be responsible for the funds disbursed to their institution, whether they come from Génome Québec or from other sources.

Collaborator

A collaborator is a person who is not involved in the day-to-day execution of the research, but whose role is to provide a specific service or expertise (e.g., access to equipment, provision of specific reagents, training in specialized technique, statistical analysis, access to a cohort, etc.). Collaborators are also responsible for the funds remitted to their institution, whether they come from Génome Québec or from other sources.

Representatives for User or Partner Organizations

User organizations are organizations that are able to use the information generated through research to make informed decisions on issues such as guidelines and practice standards, policies, programs, and product development and use. Examples of user organizations include companies (private or public, Canadian or foreign), industry consortia and associations, government departments and agencies (federal, provincial, and municipal), health care organizations, and non-profit organizations.

Non-academic Partner

Some programs or competitions, such as the Genomics Integration Program, may require the presence of a non-academic partner. This person is affiliated with and represents a user organization that plans to further develop innovation or knowledge arising from a project until it is put into practice in its internal operations, commercialized, or made available to end users.

3.2. Sharing of Data and Publications

Génomique Québec is firmly committed to the principle of rapidly sharing Génomique Québec-funded research outputs, including open access to publications, the release of data, and the sharing of unique resources with the scientific community. By providing the broader scientific community with timely access to the outputs of Génomique Québec-funded projects, research will be accelerated for the greater benefit of Quebec and the global community.

Génomique Québec encourages funded research that is peer-reviewed and published in online repositories, appropriate public databases or journals to ensure free access within 12 months of publication. The following policies should guide the dissemination of results as well as data management and sharing:

- Open access policy for dissemination of research developed by the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ)
- Tri-council data management policy

Génomique Québec supports a range of programs, from discovery to practical application, in partnership with many different organizations. When details concerning one or more of the policies mentioned above do not apply to a specific program, it will be specified in the Request for Applications (RFA). Génomique Québec recognizes the importance of ensuring the confidentiality of information with commercial value and seeks to strike a balance between openness and the protection of financial interests. Applicants can thus request an exemption from data-sharing requirements to allow for commercialization. Génomique Québec will evaluate these requests, and applicants will be promptly informed of its decision.

4. APPLICATION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Application requirements vary, depending on the program and the competition. For more on the specific requirements, applicants are required to review the relevant documentation on the competition/program, the RFA, and the application forms. At each stage, the appropriate application forms must be used without modification. Page limits will be strictly applied. Pages that exceed these limits and unsolicited appendices will be removed before the application is evaluated. Due to tight review timelines, applicants will be notified if this occurs, but they will not have the option of revising their application to comply with the page limit.

Génomique Québec holds the final decision on the eligibility of any application it receives, unless indicated otherwise in the RFA.

In cases where applicants submit identical applications (or very similar) to more than one Génomique Québec competition for which the evaluation periods overlap, Génomique Québec will automatically withdraw the second application from the competition.

Applications are evaluated by an independent committee with the proper expertise, and processes vary based on the program and the competition. Please refer to the RFA for further information. Génomique Québec may adjust its evaluation processes where warranted by the complexity of the applications received or other relevant factors. Any changes will be communicated rapidly through the Génomique Québec website.

An evaluation of financial documents will be carried out in conjunction with the scientific review of the application. Applications that do not meet the budget criteria for the competition/program or do not comply with these guidelines may not receive funding.

When funding for a project has been approved, Génomique Québec may request a detailed budget.

5. USE OF FUNDS FROM GÉNOME QUÉBEC AND OTHER SOURCES

Funding from Génome Québec must be used solely to pay for the costs for activities that directly support the objectives of the project outlined in the budget approved by Génome Québec. The following guidelines concerning the eligibility of expenses apply to all funds set out in the project budget, whether from Génome Québec or from other sources.

Please note that Génome Québec funds can be used only for costs incurred in Quebec by eligible institutions (see 3.1.1) and for services provided by independent third parties under the terms of a reasonable fee-for-service agreement or contract.

5.1. Eligible Costs

Funds can only be used for eligible costs, defined as reasonable costs for items that directly support the objectives of the approved project. Project budgets must NOT include items for which funding has already been approved by other sources, unless the request for funding for these items was made specifically to support activities as co-funding under the Génome Québec project, and unless it meets all other eligibility criteria.

The RFA will describe exceptions or additional guidelines concerning the eligible costs applicable to projects funded under a specific competition or program.

Unless otherwise specified in the RFA, expenses funded through Génome Québec must be incurred after the Notice of Award (NOA) in order to be deemed eligible, whereas expenses covered by eligible co-funding, incurred up to six months prior to the NOA, may be deemed eligible.

The main categories of eligible costs are as follows: salaries and benefits, consumables, equipment, general and administrative costs, and services from others, as described below.

Salaries and benefits

- Salaries and benefits for team members (note that salaries of researchers or senior management currently funded by their respective organizations are not considered eligible costs).
- Actual benefit rates as charged by the institution. Eligible benefits include payroll taxes, group insurance and the group pension plan only.
- Actual cost of release time from teaching and clinical duties, if supported by a letter from the institution.
- Annual inflation for salary expenditures in the second year and in the subsequent years of the project at actual rates as charged by the institution.
- Maternity and/or parental leave for students and postdoctoral fellows. Génome Québec will allow for maternity and/or parental leave payments to eligible students and postdoctoral fellows who are paid under the project and who are the primary caregivers of a child. The payment will be remitted to them based on their current salary or stipend for a maximum period of eight months following the child's birth or adoption. If both parents are supported by project funds, each parent may take a portion of the leave for a combined maximum of eight months. The payment will be prorated if the student or postdoctoral fellow is being trained in research on a part-time basis. Students or fellows who are eligible for employment insurance or parental leave payments from other sources do not qualify for parental leave payments.

Equipment

- Equipment includes any item (or interrelated set of items comprising a system) that is used in whole or in part for the research proposed and that meets the following three conditions: 1) durable tangible property; 2) having a useful life of more than one year; 3) a cost of \$2,000 or more. Génome Québec funds must not be used to purchase equipment valued at more than \$25,000.
- The equipment category also includes research infrastructure such as scientific collections and information databases used in whole or in part for the research proposed.
- Total funds from Génome Québec used for equipment must not exceed 25% of the Génome Québec-approved contribution.
- Where possible, favour equipment manufactured in Quebec.

Consumables

- Materials and supplies: Includes items that meet at least one of the following conditions: 1) non-durable tangible property; 2) useful life of one year or less; 3) cost of less than \$2,000. For example, a laptop computer that costs less than \$2,000 would be deemed a consumable even though it is a durable tangible item with a useful life of more than one year.
- For consumables commonly used in most laboratories, a reasonable general rate per FTE will be accepted.
- The consumables category also includes items such as equipment maintenance contracts and general maintenance of research infrastructure, travel related directly to the conduct of the project, monetary compensation for participation in the project, and the cost of samples from scientific collections used for the proposed research.
- Costs associated with translating results into applications, e.g., technology development, proof-of-concept validation, market research, patenting, and business case development.
- Costs associated with downstream product development, such as formulation, primary kit or package design, and protocol development and validation, may be eligible and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Where possible, favour consumables distributed in Quebec.

General and Administrative Costs

- Costs associated with communicating findings, including the costs of developing Web-based information (including website maintenance fees) and publicizing findings through traditional media, video, etc.
- Page charges for publications, including fees to ensure open access to findings (e.g., costs of publication in an open-access journal or costs of providing open access to an article).
- Costs of preparing a research manuscript for publication.
- Costs of translating findings for dissemination.
- Costs of holding a workshop or seminar directly related to the funded research (including costs for non-alcoholic beverages and meals).
- Travel and subsistence costs (meals – except alcohol – and accommodations), including reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for research conferences and collaborative trips, air travel corresponding to the lowest available rate, without exceeding full economy fare, and travel cancellation insurance.
- Standard office supplies (paper, photocopies, mailing expenses, etc.).
- Monthly fees for the rental or installation of lines (telephone, videoconference, or other links).
- Monthly Internet access fees at the institution or at home.

- Rental or purchase of cellular phones, including service plans and local and long-distance fees.
- Costs related to professional training or development.
- Administrative costs must not exceed five percent (5%) of the non-administrative budget costs.

Services from others

- Services from others refers to the costs related to services provided by Génome Québec's Genomics Technology Platforms or by other fee-for-service providers, or costs for access to databases used in whole or in part for the research proposed.
- Applications must include letters from service providers describing in detail and quantifying the specific work requested, specifying unit costs or pricing schedules, and providing other relevant details.
- Though project leaders are encouraged to work with the Centre d'expertise et de Services Génome Québec, they may use other fee-for-service providers, either in Canada or abroad. Project leaders must include a justification for their choice of fee-for-service providers and, for out-of-province fee-for-service providers, they must include the reasons for which a Quebec-based alternative was not retained. The justification should address such factors as availability, quality, timeliness, and cost of the services provided.

5.2. Ineligible Costs

Examples of ineligible costs include:

- Payments to out-of-province residents, for example the salary and benefits of a project team member.
- Costs of bonuses and staff recognition.
- Discretionary severance and separation packages.
- Costs of entertainment, hospitality and gifts, for example for purposes of networking with colleagues and meeting with staff.
- Education-related costs, such as thesis preparation, tuition, and course fees.
- Costs involved in the preparation of teaching materials.
- Indirect project costs, including institutional overhead costs.
- Rent, renovation or construction of buildings or facilities, and the opportunity cost of using existing infrastructure.
- Costs of basic services, such as heating, lighting, water, compressed air, distilled water, vacuums, and janitorial services offered to all laboratories in a research facility.
- Insurance fees for buildings and equipment.
- The costs of moving a lab.
- Costs associated with regulatory compliance, including ethical review, biohazard or radiation safety, environmental assessments, or provincial or municipal regulations and by-laws.
- Costs associated with commercialization beyond the proof-of-concept phase, such as packaging, testing, marketing, and related consultants.
- Sales and marketing activities, such as sales training, marketing strategy development, detail aids, and sales-related promotional and educational events.
- Inflation applied to consumables, equipment, general and administrative costs or services from others, such as technology platforms.
- Monthly parking fees for vehicles, unless required specifically for field work.
- Sales taxes for which an exemption or a rebate applies.

- Costs of alcoholic beverages.

6. CO-FUNDING

Génomique Québec's model is founded on partnership and leverages its investments in research projects through co-funding. This approach aims to stimulate new and greater investments in genomics research and development in Quebec and is a tangible indicator of a partner's interest in the outcomes of the research.

Génomique Québec therefore normally requires that a portion of the requested funding for eligible costs for any given project be obtained through co-funding from other sources. The co-funding requirements will be specified in the RFA for each competition or program. In cases where co-funding is required, a well-developed plan for fully secured co-funding from eligible sources must be provided at the time of application. Génomique Québec reserves the right to withdraw or reduce its funding for any approved project if there is a significant change in the project's co-funding status.

As mentioned above, expenses covered by eligible co-funding and incurred up to six months prior to the NOA may be deemed eligible. Project budgets must NOT include items for which funding from other sources has already been approved, unless the application for funding of these items was made specifically to support activities in the Génomique Québec project and meets all the other eligibility criteria, and unless the award was given fewer than 12 months prior to the receipt of the award from Génomique Québec.

6.1. Eligible Sources of Co-funding for Projects

Eligible co-funding sources include:

- Companies
- Venture capital or other investment funds
- An industry consortium
- Institutional funds, trust funds, or foundations
- Charities and philanthropic organizations
- Departments and agencies of the federal government (e.g., the three research funding agencies of Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and regional development agencies)
- Departments and agencies of provincial and municipal governments, funded by sources other than the MEIE
- Volunteer organizations
- Individuals
- Organizations funded by the federal government may be eligible in part, excluding the portion funded by the MEIE. Please contact Génomique Québec for further details (examples: Canada Foundation for Innovation [CFI], Mitacs)

Unless otherwise specified in the RFA, funds from the MEIE, such as funds from the FRQ and sector-based industrial research clusters in Quebec (regroupements sectoriels de recherche industrielle du Québec), are ineligible sources of co-funding for Génomique Québec-funded projects.

6.2. Co-funding Requirements

Co-funding must be applied to eligible costs directly related to new and incremental activities that are an integral part of the Génome Québec-approved project (see Eligible Costs, section 5.1).

6.2.1. In-kind Contributions

In-kind contributions, defined as non-cash eligible budget items that can be given a cash value (such as salaries for company personnel working on the project), may be considered co-funding in the following cases:

- The value can be reasonably determined and supported by documentation from the financial partner.
- The expenditure represents an item that would otherwise have to be acquired with cash. This excludes the cost of pre-existing facilities or equipment (i.e., budgets cannot include the opportunity costs of space or equipment).

Supplier discounts, such as the generally accessible institutional discounts available to medical and/or research institutions, are not eligible as co-funding.

The value of existing intellectual property (IP) transferred to a project is NOT considered eligible co-funding unless it is a contribution from a supplier of IP (e.g., a licence that would otherwise have to be acquired from an external supplier). These items must be supported by appropriate documentation from the supplier's executive management.

Funding to support the indirect costs of a project (including overhead) is not eligible co-funding.

6.2.2. Valuation of in-kind Contributions

The valuation of in-kind (non-cash) contributions must be supported by a clear rationale and calculation of how the value of the contribution was determined (including documentation in support of all assumptions, price lists, quotes from suppliers, letters of support, etc.). All in-kind contributions must be auditable by external experts, and clear explanations are required if there are discrepancies between the value set out in the co-funding document and the project budget. Examples of documentation in support of in-kind co-funding:

Salaries

Unless the RFA specifies other information requested, each in-kind salary line must be detailed by position in the co-funding letter and represent the actual salary and benefits of the position in accordance with the applicable salary provisions of Eligible Costs listed in section 5.1.

Consumables

The co-funding letter must specify the cost incurred by the co-funder to purchase the consumables or the price that would typically be paid for the items on the commercial market. Documentation justifying these costs may be required.

For samples:

- If samples are typically available at no cost, then there is no cost associated with purchasing such samples; consequently, they cannot be assigned a value considered as co-funding.
- If samples are typically sold, then any proposed contribution would require the same documentation as equipment and software.

Equipment and software

- Letter from the supplier's senior manager showing the price that the customer would typically have paid for the equipment or software (net of typical discounts, including institutional discounts not eligible as co-funding).
- For custom-made or used equipment, a third-party valuation will normally be required.
- For previously developed custom software or intellectual property, only new costs are eligible.

6.2.3. Documentation Required to Support Co-funding

Applications must include complete documentation in support of the proposed co-funding, including a letter of commitment or an agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the proposed co-funding and a description of how the co-funding will directly and exclusively support the objectives of the Génome Québec-funded project.

The following provides specific examples of the documentation required, depending on the co-funding source or type:

From a government:

- Confirmation that the government will provide co-funding
- The amount expected
- A letter signed by a high-ranking government official with appropriate authority

From a funding agency:

- Letter from the institution confirming that it authorizes the use of funds received from the funding agency for the project. The letter must include the date of the award from the funding agency and the term of the funding received.

The institution must ensure that the funding is being used for eligible costs included in the budget of the Génome Québec-approved project. As noted above, project budgets must NOT include items for which funding from other sources has already been approved, unless the application for funding of these items was submitted specifically to support activities in the Génome Québec project, meets all the other eligibility criteria, and the funding was granted fewer than 12 months prior to the funding from Génome Québec.

From organizations including industry, charities, and philanthropic organizations:

- Documentation and supporting information clearly demonstrating the organization's level and terms of commitment to the project. Appropriate documentation may include a board resolution and/or a letter from the organization's CEO, legal counsel, or corporate secretary.

Depending on the organization and the level of funding committed, the following documentation could be requested:

- Reasonable documentation attesting to the organization's financial viability and ability to provide the co-funding. Documentation could include the organization's most recent audited

financial statements, including the auditor's report, balance sheet, income statement, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements.

- Any other information or documentation providing credible support for the organization's financial viability and ability to fulfill its co-funding commitments (e.g., press releases announcing significant new financing, cash flow projections, etc.).

7. ADMINISTRATION

7.1. Project Readiness

Leaders of approved projects must meet, through formally submitted documentation, all relevant conditions that may be specified in the NOA from Génome Québec and must be in a position to receive Génome Québec funding no more than three months after the effective date of the NOA. Génome Québec reserves the right to withdraw funding for any approved project that is not ready to receive funding at the specified time.

7.2. Conditions of Release of Génome Québec Funds

Before funds can be disbursed, the following conditions for funding must be met:

- All conditions for the release of funds set out in the NOA have been met. The funds will be remitted to the project once eligible organizations participating in the research have signed an agreement with Génome Québec. Agreements must clearly demonstrate agreement among the relevant parties on all significant issues, including but not limited to, the nature of financial contributions, intellectual property ownership and management, data release and sharing, the commercialization process, the funding term, the termination policy, financial and administrative policies, and periodic expense and co-funding status reports. The agreements must comply with the agreement between Génome Québec and the other funding partners, where applicable.
- Génome Québec may request a revised budget, updated objectives and milestones, in cases where the recommendations of the evaluation committee (set out in review documents and the NOA) entail budget implications. Génome Québec may refuse all other revisions to the budget prior to the start of a project. Final budget approval will be based on a review by Génome Québec.
- Génome Québec reserves the right to withdraw its funding for any approved project or platform if it does not meet the requirements of the competition or if there is a substantial change in the co-funding status.
- Pertinent certification must be secured for the research approved for funding.
- A commitment to make available the results and data within 12 months of publication.
- A commitment to ensure that the conduct of research and the use of funds is consistent with the spirit and intent associated with funds from the MEIE and a commitment to conduct research in accordance with the policies pertaining to the responsible conduct of research developed by the FRQ.

7.3. Management of Funding

To ensure that Génome Québec-funded projects meet their objectives while complying with these guidelines, Génome Québec monitors projects on an ongoing basis.

7.3.1. Financial Management of Projects

Génom Québec will begin to advance funds at the start of the project to the host institution once all the conditions set out in section 7.2 of these guidelines have been met. The host institution shall undertake to distribute funds to participating institutions, where applicable. It shall also be responsible for ensuring that the expenses presented by these institutions are eligible, in compliance with these guidelines and the approved budget.

Génom Québec provides funding in regular installments, “in advance”, subject to the receipt of expenditure reports (for funds from both the institution and co-funding sources), including actuals for the previous reporting period, and for large-scale projects, estimates for the current reporting period and forecasts for the reporting period of the advance.

7.3.1.1. Financial Management of Small Projects

Génom Québec will follow a streamlined payment process for small projects in order to reduce its administrative burden. Barring the exceptions set out in the RFA, for all projects with total Génom Québec funding equal to or lower than \$500,000, Génom Québec will disburse to the host institution the entire sum of its approved project contribution as soon as the conditions for releasing the funds (section 7.2) have been met, minus a holdback of 10%. This holdback will be disbursed upon submission of the closure documents to Génom Québec and their approval by Génom Québec.

7.3.1.2. Financial Management of Medium- and Large-scale Projects

Barring the exceptions set out in the RFA, for all medium-scale projects with total Génom Québec funding between \$500,001 and \$1 million, Génom Québec will remit annual installments of its contribution to the host institution, according to the percentages and dates set out in the NOA

For all large-scale projects with total Génom Québec funding in excess of \$1 million, Génom Québec will disburse to the host institution:

- The first five quarters of the budgeted Génom Québec project contribution in one installment, once the conditions for the release of funds have been met (section 7.2).
- Its contributions for subsequent years in annual installments based on the budgeted contribution approved by Génom Québec, the expenses incurred during the previous time period(s), and the financial needs of the project for the upcoming period. Adjustments to these contributions may be made to take into account any potential delays in the receipt of project co-funding.

In the final year of the project, a holdback of 10% will be applied, up to a maximum of \$50,000. This holdback will be disbursed upon submission of closure documents to Génom Québec and their approval by Génom Québec.

The financial status of co-funding for medium- and large-scale projects must be subject to an annual report, unless indicated otherwise in the RFA.

7.3.2. Reporting and Performance Measurement

Génom Québec expectations:

The results of Génom Québec-funded projects must be presented in a reasoned, diligent and transparent manner. To obtain funding on the scheduled dates and ensure the smooth conduct of

funded activities, it is crucial to submit all the reports (e.g., financial report, progress report, and metrics) by the deadlines set out in the NOA, as stipulated in the agreements signed by the institutions.

Periodic project reports will typically include updates on progress against project milestones, actual expenditures of Génome Québec funds compared to the approved budget, the receipt and uses of co-funding, and descriptions of project outputs, such as highly qualified personnel, publications and other achievements.

7.3.2.1. Financial Reports

Financial reports prepared by the host institution and signed by its finance department and the administrative project leader must be sent, together with supporting documentation, to the Génome Québec program manager responsible for the project.

A financial report template, including the approved budget for the project, will be prepared by Génome Québec and provided to the host institution.

Actual expenses incurred by the project must include i) all disbursements and ii) supplier invoices for services rendered or supplies received but not yet disbursed. Items that do not come under these categories should not be included in the report. Financial reports must be based on the institution's accounting records. Génome Québec will request an explanation for any variance of more than 25% and \$50,000 between actual and budgeted expenses, and it reserves the right to refuse this explanation if it is deemed unsatisfactory. Génome Québec reserves the right to request further justification for any amounts included in financial reports, and to hire an external firm to audit project expenses. The main objective of such an audit is to ensure that expenses claimed meet all the criteria set out in the agreement's financial conditions and the provisions concerning eligible expenses; in other words, to make sure that:

- Expenses claimed reflect eligible activities and budget categories.
- Expenses claimed by the host institution and other participating institutions are actual expenses incurred by the project and adequately supported by invoices and/or proofs of payment.
- Assets are used for the purposes of the project and their existence can be verified.
- Expenses claimed by each institution comply with the financial guidelines presented herein.

In the event of an audit, Génome Québec will contact in advance the finance department of the host institution.

7.3.2.2. Progress Reports and Metrics

For small projects, the project leaders and Génome Québec will meet at least once a year to monitor the progress of the project.

Medium- and large-scale projects funded by Génome Québec must submit an annual progress report signed by the project leaders and must provide metrics to the Génome Québec program manager responsible for the project, based on the templates provided.

In addition, project leaders, where possible, must agree to participate in, and provide information on, any evaluation activities that may be undertaken from time to time by Génome Québec up to five years subsequent to the end date of the project. It is the responsibility of the host institution to ensure that project leaders meet these reporting requirements.

7.3.3. Summary Table of Installments and Reports

Génome Québec's contribution to the project	Advance			Reporting Frequency		
	Initial installment based on the approved budget	Frequency of subsequent installments	Holdback	Financial report	Progress report	Final report
≤\$500,000	Total contribution less 10% (holdback)	N/A	10% of the contribution up to a maximum of \$50,000	At the end of the project	Annual follow-up meeting	Within two months of project completion
\$500,001 to \$1,000,000	Based on the percentage set out in the NOA	Annual, according to the percentage set out in the NOA		Annual	Annual	
≥\$1,000,001	Amount corresponding to the first five quarters	Annual, based on the project expenses and needs		Annual	Annual	

7.4. Change Management

Over the term of a project, adjustments to the initially approved plan may be required due to changes to the scientific, managerial, or financial conditions of the project. Project leaders are required to notify Génome Québec before such changes are applied, by requesting changes to the approved plan. In order to do so, a summary of the proposed changes, the justification for these changes, and their impact on the scientific program and budget must be submitted by email to the Génome Québec program manager responsible for the project.

Scientific changes requiring approval include a significant modification to the research plan or the status and involvement of the project leader or a co-investigator.

Financial changes requiring approval include budget and co-funding changes exceeding \$75,000 per budget category, item or year, on a cumulative basis.

Certain major changes may require that change request forms be completed to provide additional information.

Génome Québec will evaluate the changes requested and make its decision. Upon approval, the last revised budget will serve as a reference for the duration of the project. It cannot be replaced by any other budget, unless Génome Québec issues a specific directive to that effect.

7.5. No-cost Extension

To ensure that maximum benefits are gained from the projects, Génome Québec may provide an opportunity to apply for a one-time no-cost extension (NCE) for a maximum of 12 months. The option of a NCE will be detailed in the RFA for the competition or program.

No-cost extensions may be requested for projects that:

- Require more time to meet the objectives and complete the approved research activities.

AND

- Have unspent funds forecast at the approved end date.

All requests for a NCE must be received at least four (4) months prior to the scheduled project end date. For all requests, Génome Québec will perform the appropriate due diligence to ensure that the request is reasonable before approving it, if applicable.

7.6. Final Reports

Within two (2) months of the completion of the project, project leaders must submit to Génome Québec a final report demonstrating the achievement of the objectives, metrics, deliverables and impacts of the project, along with a detailed financial report in a format determined by Génome Québec. A percentage of the final payment will be held back by Génome Québec and will only be disbursed to the host institution after Génome Québec receives and approves the final report. The holdback for each project will be calculated as 10% of the total Génome Québec contribution to the project, up to a maximum of \$50,000.

For purposes of a financial settlement at the end of the project, Génome Québec's percentage share of the total actual expenditures is based on the most recently approved budget up to the maximum approved contribution amount. A revised budget may include less co-funding than originally approved but must always meet program conditions set out in the RFA.

Funds from Génome Québec's contribution that are unspent at the end of the project must be remitted to Génome Québec no more than three months after the approved project end date.